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NEWS-PRESS

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'Truth' About the Birchers?

In a full page advertisement in yesterday's News-Press, the John Birch Society called attention to its seventh anniversary and set out to answer its own rhetorical question, "What Is the John Birch Society?"

A subtitle to the article said: "The Truth May Surprise You."

The News-Press is inclined to agree with the subtitle.

For one thing, the "truth" as reflected in this official statement, seems to be that the society has no connection with a Robert Welch who founded an organization of the same name, and authored a publication that named as "Communist agents, dupes, servants or sympathizers" such distinguished Americans as Presidents Roosevelt, Truman and Eisenhower, Secretary of State Dulles, CIA Director Allen Dulles, Chief Justice Earl Warren, and other high officials of our government.

We are surprised that the name of Welch does not appear once in the full page of type, for we had not heard of his being deposed as authoritarian head of the John Birch Society which he created.

The extravagant charges against great Americans that he made in his pamphlet "The Politician" were watered down somewhat when this document was issued as a book; and have been worded more cautiously in the official Blue Book and monthly bulletins of the society. But the sense and intent remain as the guiding thought-lines for chapters and members.

Surprising to the moderate-conservative-progressive Republicans of California must be the alleged "truth" that it is the Communists who have "beguiled a lot of very good Americans into joining the attack on us" (the John Birch Society). Apparently the California Republican League, which recently resolved that membership in "extremist groups such as the John Birch Society" is incompatible with membership in the Republican Party, has been hoodwinked by the Reds into doing their bidding.

The ad states: "The John Birch Society

is by no means a political organization." This must be surprising to the non-Gold-water Republicans who watched or participated in the Republican National Convention in San Francisco in 1964.

The ad states: "We have insisted from the beginning that we are fighting the Communists — and nobody else."

This must be surprising to the Chief Justice of the United States, and the other members of the High Court; surprising, too, to Sen. Kuchel, Gov. Rockefeller, Gov. Romney, and all the moderate, progressive and liberal leaders of both the Democratic and Republican Parties in this state and the nation. They have been laboring under the delusion that the John Birch Society was fighting the income tax, the health and welfare programs, the war on poverty, the civil rights measures, democracy itself, and a lot of things that cannot be designated as "communism" by any literate person.

If the full page ad is telling the surprising "truth" about the John Birch Society on its seventh anniversary, then there has been an internal revolution within the society that Robert Welch started back in December, 1958. Before rejoicing over this prospect, however, rational Republicans, Democrats and independents should check with the nearest American Opinion Library maintained by the society, to see whether the notorious works that cry "betrayal," "treason" and "Red conspiracy" against distinguished and patriotic leaders of this country have been removed from the shelves.

It may be that this full page of "truth" is not, after all, "the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

Rational Americans do not need the Birchers to teach them the facts of life about the dangers of Communist aggression, infiltration and subversion. Nor do they need the Communists to teach them the facts of life about the anti-democratic, anti-liberal and anti-progressive purposes of the John Birch Society — as established by Robert Welch.

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